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PRODUCERS APPROVE AMENDMENTS TO FEDERAL MILK ORDERS

WASHINGTON, Dec. 21, 2000 -- Producers supplying milk for each of the 11 Federal milk markets have approved amending the current Class III and Class IV pricing formulas under Federal milk orders. USDA determined producer approval by polling the producer cooperative associations in eight of the markets, and by conducting referenda in the Northeast, Mideast, and Upper Midwest markets.

The interim amended orders will become effective for milk marketed on or after Jan. 1, 2001.

This interim final rule responds to a Congressional mandate to reconsider the Class III and Class IV pricing formulas included in the final rule for the consolidation and reform of Federal milk orders. . USDA held a hearing May 8 to 12, 2000, in Alexandria, Va., to consider proposals submitted by the industry to change the formulas. A tentative final decision on these amendments was announced on Dec. 7. Comments are due on or before Feb. 5, 2001.

The milk marketing order program ensures the fair marketing and pricing of milk.. Milk marketing orders classify milk by use, set minimum prices that handlers must pay for each class of milk, and provide for paying average prices to all dairy farmers who supply a marketing order.

For copies of this rule and additional information contact any market administrator office, listed below. The interim final rule and additional background information can be accessed on the web at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/dairy>.

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